

SIR GEORGE WILLIAMS UNIVERSITY

Minutes of the Sixth Meeting of the Board of Graduate Studies

Monday, December 14, 1970 - 2:00 P.M.

Present:

Prof. S. French, Chairman; Prof. V. Byers; Prof. J. Bordan; Dean J.C. Callaghan; Dean I. Campbell; Assoc. Prof. L. Colebrook; Prof. M.P. duPlessis; Assoc. Prof. H.E. Enesco; Assoc. Prof. J. Harrison; Asst. Prof. P. London; Assoc. Prof. H. Mann; Mr. J. McBride; Assoc. Prof. S. McDonough; Assoc. Prof. D. McKeen; Dr. J.W. O'Brien; Prof. C. Potter; Mr. B. Smart; Dean J. Ufford; Mrs. R. Arthur, Acting Secretary.
(Apologies received from Dr. D. Gold, Mrs. H. Howard).

6.2 MINUTES

A change in the wording of the last sentence on page 3 was required, this now to read "...concerning alternative titles." It was moved and seconded that the minutes of the meeting of November 16 be adopted as amended (U.C.) (Ufford, Colebrook).

6.4 REPORT FROM FACULTY OF ARTS RE Ph.D. IN RELIGION AND Ph.D. IN THE HUMANITIES, 1972-73

Tabled until the next meeting.

6.5 QUOTAS FOR ENROLLMENT

The Faculties of Commerce and Engineering have not submitted to B.G.S. their reports concerning the suggested quotas for enrollment in their graduate programmes. In the Faculty of Engineering, the reason for this is the discussions to be held in January concerning research supervision loads.

6.6 ACADEMIC EVALUATION AND ACADEMIC OFFENSES

Tabled until the next meeting.

6.7 MID-TERM AND SUMMER ENTRANCE

The Committee of Graduate Programme Directors has seen and accepted this document (5. D12.1). The Faculties have not reported. Notification was given that it would be necessary to receive their comments in time to prepare any required revisions to the graduate Calendar. Therefore, the February meeting was the last one at which this issue could be fruitfully raised.

6.8 THESIS REGULATIONS (Document 6.8.1)

Dr. McKeen, in preparing his proposal, had consulted with each department and their recommendations were included. There were a variety of references suggested for use by students preparing their theses, applicable to different disciplines. It was noted that the wording as suggested for use in the graduate Calendar should read "...as articulated in any one of the following manuals:".

*Motion: (McKeen, McBride) "That the report be approved as amended".

Vote: Carried

6.9 MAJOR MODIFICATIONS (Document 6.9.1)

The Chairman noted that the items "Major Modifications" and "Minor Modifications" would be appearing as regular items on the next two agendas, preparatory to the re-writing of the graduate Calendar.

The major modifications proposed by the Department of Religion concerned the programme for the M.A. in the History and Philosophy of Religion. The document had been approved by the Arts Faculty Sub-Committee on Graduate Studies, and forwarded to B.G.S. A wording change in the third line of Item 6 was required; "...students competent in the appropriate languages".

*Motion: (McDonough, Harrison) "That the modifications be approved".

Vote: Carried

6.10 MINOR MODIFICATIONS (Document 6.10.1)

It was first noted that the changes proposed in this document were not actual changes in the programme, but rather consisted of the addition of two courses. A discussion followed concerning whether alterations of this type need come to the B.G.S. for approval. It was decided that the Board does not need to give formal approval of course additions in the case of programmes such as Economics which use the "category" system of course numbering (as discussed by the Board at its January 19, 1970 meeting). Within the categories, the department has authority to add or subtract a limited number of courses, in consultation with the Dean of the Faculty. The Board should, however, be notified of what alterations are made, in the form of a written statement.

It was this sort of report that the Board would now like to see from the Economics Department. The document under discussion was not considered suitable because 1) the numbers of the new courses were not given, and 2) the introductory paragraph refers to the modifications as "changes" whereas the Board considered them to be simply additions to present offerings. Further, the Assistant Registrar noted that the Graduate Calendar does not normally list the undergraduate prerequisites to graduate courses, and he questioned the need to do this in the Economics case. Consequently, the Board asked that the Economics Department re-submit this document, making the changes suggested to bring it in line with the sort of report considered suitable for simple notification of alterations.

6.11 TASK FORCE ON FINANCIAL AID TO GRADUATE STUDENTS

The Chairman offered apologies for the fact that members had received copies of the revisions to the Task Force Report just that morning, and would therefore have had little time to study it. In brief, the changes made were editorial, intended to alter the impression given by the original report that the Task Force thought only those full-time graduate students who could be given financial aid should be admitted. Certain pages had been altered to make clear that the Task Force did not intend to take as strong a position in that direction as it might have appeared.

Members wanted more time to consider the report and discussion of it was therefore postponed until the next meeting.

*Motion: (Potter, McKeen) "To table consideration of the Report until the next B.G.S. meeting."

Vote: Carried

6.12 GRADUATE TRANSCRIPTS (Document 6.12.1)

At the Canadian Association of Graduate Schools Conference in Winnipeg in November, the Chairman had discovered that a wide variety of grading schemes are used in Canadian graduate schools. The Deans there had made the comment that it is often difficult to interpret transcripts coming from another graduate school; and hence, in order to clarify the S.G.W.U. grading system for people outside the University, the Chairman had contacted Mr. Smart to see if an explanation of the S.G.W.U. grades could be mailed out with each graduate transcript. The document under consideration had been prepared by Mr. Smart, in consultation with Mrs. Arthur, and was proposed as the official explanation of the S.G.W.U. grades. Mr. Smart added that the grade descriptions had been derived from those in the graduate Calendar, with some abbreviation and several editorial changes, meant to clarify the usage of particular grades, notably "In Progress" and "Late". A discussion followed, in which the difference in the application of those two grades was questioned. There was concern expressed that the 'In Progress' grade, when described in this fashion, had too narrow an application and would seem to apply only when all the students in a class required an extended deadline because of the nature of the course. What of the student who had good reason for requiring an extension? Should this student be considered "In Progress" or "Late"? Professor McKeen expressed the wish that "In Progress" be used in the case of a student requiring extra time to complete the work, through an arrangement with his instructor. The term "Late" had, in his opinion, a pejorative tone.

It was decided that, for the present, any information sheet sent out with transcripts should conform to the wording used in the graduate Calendar. Further clarification of the meaning of the grades could be discussed between the Chairman, Mr. Smart and Mrs. Arthur and suggested changes to the graduate Calendar could be brought before the Board at a future date.

6.13 OTHER

1. The Chairman raised a matter of considerable importance to the work of the Appraisals Committee. A question had arisen about the evaluation reports to be prepared by the external consultants. Their reports were to consist of two parts, Part II to be confidential. There was now some disagreement as to whether Part II should be shown to all the members of the sub-committee reviewing the programme in question, or to only the Principal, Vice-Principal, Chairman of the Board of Graduate Studies, Dean of the Faculty, and Chairman of the Department. A compromise position between these two alternatives was being suggested namely, that the Department Chairman should have the final decision as to whether Part II would be circulated any further, with the strong suggestion that the sub-committee should see Part II if the report recommended suspension of the programme. The following points were raised in the discussion that ensued:

- as a further aspect on the compromise, the Faculty Dean and Chairman of the B.G.S. would report the Part II findings to the sub-committee, without giving the names of the individuals concerned.
- the problem of potentially libelous statements being made in the external consultant's report had to be considered if the report were to be too widely circulated. There was a reminder that committee members were to operate under rules of strict confidentiality. However, the question of the inability of the offended party to defend himself, given the present structure of the review, remained a difficult one. It was generally agreed that an individual should be given a chance to defend himself before the committee if he feels he has been libelled.
- in defense of the circulation of Part II to sub-committee members, it was argued that Part II was the critical part of the report in the sense of the severity of the criticism that might be levelled. This information would assume most relevance when the programme in question was being approved only marginally. The sub-committee did not have to publish the evidence but should be able to handle the information involved.
- the problem was perhaps an illustration of the principle that the shift of decision-making power from individuals to committees entailed a certain sacrifice of strict confidentiality.
- the format of a two-part report had been established in accordance with the model of the provincial evaluation structure.

Finally, it was agreed that the reading of Part II was necessary if the committee was to judge the value of Part I of the report. Therefore, it was agreed to abide by the original decision to allow limited circulation of the entire report (i.e. to the sub-committee).

*Motion: (Campbell, London) "That Part II of the external consultants report be shown to the sub-committee only, as well as to the Vice-Principal Academic.

Vote: For - 17
Against - 1 (Callaghan)

Carried

2. Dean Campbell brought to the attention of the members a newspaper report on the proposed provincial legislation concerning immigration. As a consequence of the requirement that immigrants to Quebec have a working knowledge of French, it appeared that certain professional bodies would be permitted to admit to courses of professional study only those of their members possessing knowledge of the French language. Following a brief discussion the Board agreed to the following:

*Motion: (Campbell, Bordan) "That B.G.S. asks the Principal and Committee of Deans to study the relevant legislation with an eye to the possible effects upon the University".

Vote: Carried

NEXT REGULAR MEETING

The next meeting of the Board will be held on January 18, 1971, in Room 762-1.

6.14 ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned on a motion of adjournment at 3:35 p.m., having convened at 2:00 p.m.

Dr. S.G. French,
Chairman

Mrs. R. Arthur,
Acting Secretary